

## Podcast: The Code Switch

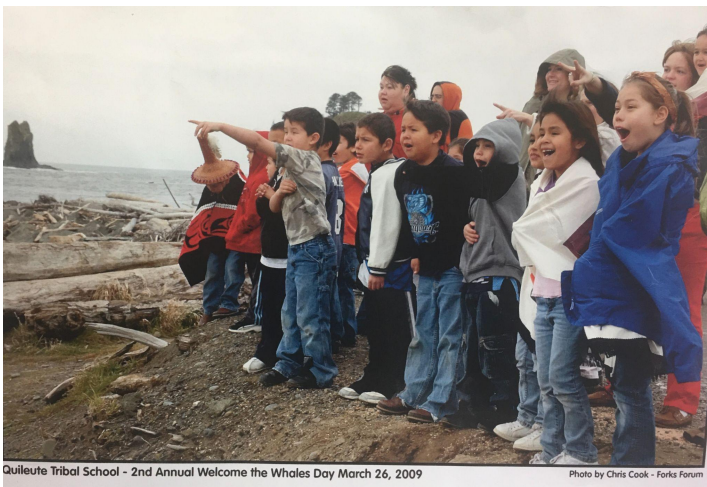
Title: The Hawaiian Language Nearly Died. A Radio Show Sparked Its Revival

LINK: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2019/06/22/452551172/the-hawaiian-language-nearly-died-a-radio-show-sparked-its-revival>

**Directions:** This is a collaborative document shared (bcc) with a number of people (70+ adults) in our community from Superintendent Mark Decker's Community Email list. As you critically read this story in the link above, I am curious if you would care to share by writing "your takeaways" below for the larger community...tell your story and connection to QTS language and culture. Remember this is a semi-public document. The audience is past and present members of the QTS community. Please consider your comments as we all celebrate Teacher (Educator) Appreciation week and "How might we take these lessons from Hawaii and apply them to Quileute Tribal School?"

**QTS Superintendent Mark J. Decker takeaway:** I noticed the picture of shoes in the blog and how each of the shoe slots had names of the children in Hawaiian. It made me think of my grandchildren Maninlp (8), Nstews (6), Mopetkwi (4) and Sti?icn (2) and watching how they are developing as Salish Language speakers and the role of their parents at home, as well as the parents commitment to language and culture development and Salish Immersion School on the traditional lands of the Salish, Kootenai and Pend Oreille (Arlee, Montana). I also took away from this article the important role of storytelling, songs, food, chants, footwork, and hand motions. Knowing your language (stories, etc) helps us to come to know who we are as people and where we come from as a person. As I have traveled to 34 countries across the world, I have seen these attributes cross all cultural boundaries and growing up in a large extended family, the stories that were told year after year at family gatherings in Montana continue to be passed along at family gatherings. It is my hope for QTS that we can continue to build on that rich history as a school from its beginnings in 1978-79 and build upon the shoulders of those who came before us at QTS to help our students know who they are, where they come from through their language and culture, as well as provide the global skills they need to function in this ever changing world. It is pretty inspiring to reflect on this legacy as we celebrate educators this week during Teacher (Educator) Appreciation Week. (Mark J. Decker time with QTS 10 months, arrived July 1, 2020)

Please do check out our school web page <https://quileutetribalschool.org/>



**Karen White takeaway:** *On this Welcoming the Whales ceremony (2009), the first and second graders lined up at the edge of the bluff overlooking the beach. As the whales spouted here and there out in the water, the kids began to get very excited, pointing and shouting "Oh!" each time one spouted. The air was very cold, but the excitement was so great that no one minded, huddling together and waiting for the next spout of water to appear.*

*The Forks Forum editor at that time was Chris Cooke. He, like many other local people who came to enjoy the ceremony and festivities, stood just below the bluff where the 1st and 2nd grades were assembled.*

*Chris saw their excitement as they scanned the ocean for spouts, so he took a photo for the newspaper. This photo is now on display, in a greatly enlarged version, at the Smithsonian National Museum I was told. What a wonderful day this was!*

**Math Teacher, William Lee, takeaway:**

"Language is the first aspect of a people to vanish...People don't recognize that until it's almost gone, because they're hanging onto their typical culture identification tags such as their songs, their dancing, their foods, their religion, maybe, or what they wear or how they look. But language is the one that is slipping away without them noticing it. And by the time it happens, it's in very dire straits."

Whenever I hear about languages which are in danger, I can't help thinking of my own. We didn't speak Irish in my house growing up and even though I studied Irish from the age of 4 through to 18, Irish still comes in second place to English in the day-to-day of Ireland. There are native speakers in my family (my great-uncle Joe, for example, living in Toronto after emigrating many years ago). The Irish were persuaded to switch to English in the 1850s and the language has declined since. About 100 years ago, we had 1 million fluent native Irish speakers, today it's down to around 80,000. Irish is arguably the oldest language in Europe with some sonic influence of Sanskrit still there (as my father-in-law, Cambodian, has also noticed, Cambodian heavily influenced by Sanskrit, as we chat in both languages in our house. We have the same sound for "two" for example as Sanskrit). The memory of my language is enormous, historical events, past rituals, feelings that were given names (we have words for the lowing of a grieving cow that just lost its calf, words for the stones which are exposed at low water, we have 32 words for field) and I know the memory of the Quileute language is enormous too. I've read the Quileute dictionary with so much interest and looked at the place names because they typically hold so much memory of our past in them (dinnseanchas they are called in Irish). I remember Miss Ann talked of gathering seagulls eggs as a child out on the sea-stack by James' Island, and there it is, I can see one of the islands is called seagull island and Miss Anne's story gives the name a meaning to me.

There's an Irish saying we had growing up which says, "Teach gan teanga, teach gan anam", meaning, a house without a language is a house without a soul (a quick search, I see online people have it as a land without a language...I'm going off memory here). "Every language game is a form of life", Ludwig Wittgenstein says in his Philosophical Investigations. Or, in other words, a language survives by speaking it. It's in the doing and where you do it. I was always persuaded to teach my children a language other than English, but actually it was French I had in mind for quite a while (a native exhibition at the museum in Victoria changed my mind at the right time). I have always longed to speak Irish but have had no one to speak it consistently with but the arrival of my first child, Darragh, presented that opportunity. I could teach him and then I would have someone to talk to. So, that's what I've done, I only speak Irish to him and our second child, Diarmuid, and although I was unsure at first, using Irish dictionaries, podcasts, Irish music, Irish children's books, I've slowly built a little microcosm of language that seems natural to him and that slowly expands as he grows. My own grasp of language is growing again for the first time in twenty years. It's lovely hearing him speak his first words in

Cambodian and in Irish (not that there's any rivalry between me and my wife...). I was unsure about what I did at first, because it's meant sometimes that I couldn't say anything to him because I didn't have the words I wanted (and had to go build the expressions). The British army (famously, infamously) travelled Ireland in the 1820s and 30s, gathering all the names of everything the Irish had names for, every river, every rivulet, tree, well, ridge, every place name, and renamed and re-bordered the country on a map with English names. In a kind of reversal of this, I've spent so much of my last year with Darragh wandering the lower village of La Push, pointing out every bird, plant, tree, every wisp of mist or cloud of flies, every grain of sand, every whiff of seawrack, and given the Irish words for them only, which have an Irish meaning to them. I tell him about seagull island where you can collect eggs whose yolks are much fluffier when you beat them to make cakes. I love the idea of the Quileute doing the same thing for themselves one day, building the language back into their houses, building the sounds back into the world around them. I think it was Melissa Burnside who told me that it broke her heart to think that the sounds would be lost to the world forever. It's a long road but one which a dedicated bunch of people with the same goal wouldn't regret. I've always admired Lucy Ross so patiently learning and teaching the language at school and the others in the community I've heard doing the same thing. Long may it continue. I'm sure it's something the school can help with.

### **Patty Fry & Miss Doebbler Takeaway - Memory and History of Quileute Tribal School**

Memory of Donald Black, known to most as Rook or Rookie. He worked at the Quileute Tribal School for about 15 years as head of Maintenance. His heart was always thinking about the children of QTS and the community. Always working to better things for them. He asked the school to purchase playground equipment for the children. Every time they got close to ordering the new playground, something would come up and it was put on the back burner. Finally, Rook decided before I leave, my dream is to get these children the playground equipment they deserve. He purchased a beautiful piece of playground equipment that was dedicated to the children in June of 2011. Engraved in the wood at the top of the equipment is one of his favorite sayings,

“All My Heart All Around” meaning Love you with all my heart and you will always be surrounded with love. Rook passed away after a long battle with cancer in July of 2011 a month after the dedication. But not before he fulfilled his dream of getting the playground equipment for the children.

Rest in Peace Rook, not forgotten to this day at QTS! Sincerely Patty Fry & Miss Doebbler



Staff gathered with Rook.



Narc & Rook praying/blessing the playground.



Rook, Shelly & Family w/ Students, Parents, Staff, Community Members at dedication.

**Changer**

There was a time  
when  
animals were people and  
when  
K<sup>ʷ</sup>áti made the shoreline  
by  
tossing fishscales as  
Wolf Clan chased him  
Southward.

When Raven gave Sun to the Sky  
and  
Daylight to the  
People who  
were animals and  
who lived here.

My small friend  
talks of these times  
seriously  
he listens avidly to legends  
and  
hears Changer when the West Wind rustles  
inland.

My young friend  
digs  
seal teeth in midden  
earth  
he soon will seek *taxlit*  
near the river  
he will find what  
he is seeking  
for  
he knows  
there was a time  
when  
animals were people and  
they lived here.

*K<sup>w</sup>o<sup>h</sup>iyóólo Oóhiyóólitilo Kolhawísti*  
Quileute Tribal School Enrichment Program  
*kolhawísti*

A schoolroom is not properly the place  
to teach a child to sing her family's  
song, or  
learn the proper time of year  
to strip the bark and gather grasses  
for the baskets  
these are things the elders teach

what kind of wood for paddles  
how many breaths a seal takes before a dive  
how to choose the weather  
for an ocean journey

these are things a father passes to a son  
a mother, to a daughter

knowing smelt time  
how to make a dipnet  
where to gather sprouts and camas

these are things we teach at school now  
Elders, in a classroom, speak to children  
with no time or place to hear at home.  
Children, captive in a schoolroom

learn respect for old ones  
hear the *K<sup>w</sup>á-ti* stories, of  
*píxtadax*, *ʔá-kil*, and Mole.

these are things we teach at school now  
we sit wisdom down with yearning  
we light longhouse fires

we can breach the gap 'tween child  
and *káʔ*, we can be  
healed, all of us  
there is a song here, here in this place  
there is a song here, waiting to be sung  
this is where Shaker and Smokehouse  
beat the same drum

*Kʷoʹiyóóilo Oóhiyóóitilo Kolhawísti*  
Quileute Tribal School Enrichment Program  
We Teach Culture At School Now

To those of you who've said,  
"Ah, that's not right, they don't  
teach that right down there."

It's alright  
If you sit down and teach your child  
the way YOU heard that story  
the way YOU learned to sing a song or  
say a word  
then we at school have not failed you  
in educating your children

We have gotten you all together  
and YOU have taught your child your people's ways  
we have pointed you the way by teaching  
something, whether you agree  
or disagree with how that is

At least now you've thought about, and  
Dragged out memories of how you learned  
and what you learned  
and then have passed it on  
That's education  
That's one generation speaking to another  
and passing down the line of years the wisdom, knowledge  
and the magic of your people

Religion and education, not your own  
almost destroyed Native culture  
religion and education, of your own  
will bring it back  
we can be healed, all of us  
we can open our hearts and  
start again to learn the  
way of a people once united  
if we open our hearts on this ground it will come again